





## Barcelona

### CNT blows small but significant strike

The reformist tendencies beginning to spread within the CNT were given concrete expression during the six day petrol station strike which paralysed the city of Barcelona and its province just before Christmas. The petrol workers struck for a daily rate of 900 ptas (£5.70); the employers refused to go beyond the 700 ptas agreed the preceding June. The strike ended without a wage increase being achieved, just a one off payment of 45,000 ptas to each employee – a pitiful result for the strikers. But the Strike Committee explained to them, 'We have put through nearly all our demands, and the employers have been defeated!' The employers however showed definite satisfaction with the outcome, even if they had to make concessions, by maintaining the 700 ptas rate they gained ground for the next round of negotiations. The 45,000 ptas were doled out as a 'special payment towards the resumption of work'.

Barcelona's Civil Governor was no less triumphant. There hadn't been too many incidents, and as he said when it was over, that was that. In a few hours of discussion with the Strike Committee he dispelled the tension and was able to demonstrate that in Barcelona the dreaded CNT – or what there was of it at the time – could be just as peaceable and 'civilised' as the obliging Comisiones Obreras. The people of Barcelona for their part

celebrated the end of the strike with huge queues for petrol for a holiday weekend. Public understanding and solidarity were not overwhelming, the Guardia Civil did not even need to threaten the workers to any extent although they did anyway, from force of habit – some petrol customers were ready to do their job for them.

The Comisiones Obreras did not hesitate to denounce the strike; the main work of organisation fell to the CNT, their Transport Syndicate, at the request of a petrol worker militant, had decided on solidarity with the strike. The CNT then – as the press wrote – 'went into its baptism of fire with a strike that would not be staged in the workshop but in the open air, with just one adversary – the employers – but a wider and more contradictory one – the people in the street'. The very wide scattering of workplaces necessitated a complex organisation which gave the unpaid agitators no rest. The primary task was to spread up-to-date information to give the lie to the bosses' version. The strike was directed by a committee elected in the daily mass meeting. Additionally, solidarity throughout the province was coordinated by a 'supercommittee'. Unusually, the idea of a 'supercommittee' had come from the Liberal Professions Syndicate (LPS) and not the syndicate concerned. Even more unusual was the fact that it was

conceived of as being a closed committee (usually in anarcho-sindicalist organisation only committees elected to fulfil specific organisational tasks are closed) and that it assumed quasi-executive powers (in flat contradiction to the spirit of anarcho-sindicalist organisation).

One has to look at the composition of the LPS and the part it played in the Catalan Regional Assembly last September to understand this new tendency within the CNT. The LPS is a syndicate of architects, doctors, lawyers etc, a kind of 'status' syndicate which has theoretically no place in an anarcho-sindicalist organisation where architects are organised in the Building syndicate, doctors in the Health syndicate, and so on. Thus in some ways the composition of the LPS is bourgeois.

In the early sessions of the Regional Assembly two different approaches to the CNT's orientation, anarchist and pure syndicalist (trade unionist), began to emerge, the outcome of which was reflected in the composition of the new Regional Committee. Only one person was re-elected from the outgoing anarchist based Committee. This off-loading of militants with proven anarchist experience is discernible in other ways, along with the rise of others who a few months previously did not even belong to the organisation or were actually in political parties.

The direction of the petrol strike along purely trade-unionist lines therefore accorded exactly with the composition of the Regional Committee. True the strike showed a tendency to radicalisation, its co-ordination helped by unpaid libertarian militants, but at the very moment this radicalisation should have been extended the strike was dissolved – through the strike committee's decision to accept the outcome of negotiations without putting it to the vote of the mass meeting. Even if some success was achieved, in that the strike was total in Barcelona city and there was 80-90% participation in the province, it was still conducted by the CNT exactly in the way the Comisiones Obreras would have run it 'except that the CNT does not have the numerical strength of the COs', as a comrade in Barcelona put it.

□ *Befreiung* translated by Liz Willis

Meanwhile the CNT intends to sue Barcelona's police chief, the evening paper *El Noticiero Universal* and Spanish Radio and TV authorities for 100,000,000 pesetas (£6 million) following their campaign to link the CNT with the petrol bomb attack which gutted Barcelona's Scala casino/dance hall complex on January 18 killing four workers. The attack on the Scala came only a few hours after the CNT had staged a massive demonstration against the *Pacte de Moncloa* (the Spanish Social Contract) and the forthcoming reformist shop steward elections, and the speed with which 80-90 anarchist militants were rounded up immediately after the attack suggested that from the outset it was going to be used (if it had not been created) to divert attention away from the CNT's opposition to the *Pacte* and if possible discredit the CNT as well. The CNT has consistently denied any connection with the Scala action, in fact 75% of the Scala workforce are CNT members, yet the police announced that the three women and six men they were charging with the attack were not only all members of the CNT but also, for good measure, members of the FAI and JL (Libertarian Youth) as well, organisations set up – according to the police – to 'destroy the Spanish state through organised terrorism'. *El Noticiero Universal's* editorial of the next day continued in the same vein. 'Moreover, we are worried by the indications we have of the revival of the anarchism of former times which can lead to such tragic demonstrations as yesterday'.

The CNT, well aware that they are sustaining a carefully concerted campaign aimed at checking their re-emergence as a mass movement over the last two years, has challenged media authorities to cede equal airtime and press space to the right of reply. In a communique issued after the Scala incident the CNT described the campaign as 'an attempt by opponents of this organisation to alienate the working class from the anarcho-sindicalist movement in order to obscure the fact that the CNT is the only syndicate that refuses to sign the *Pacte de Moncloa*' □

## National

### Gays set precedent in enlisting non-gay support

*Gay News* is the only mass-circulation newspaper in this country specifically for homosexuals. Mary 'I don't hate homosexuals' Whitehouse's successful prosecution of *Gay News* means a revival of the common law of blasphemy which was last used in 1921, the statutory law of blasphemy was repealed in 1956. Judge King-Hamilton defined blasphemous libel as any published writing about Christ or Christianity that would 'tend to cause a breach of the peace' which he explained as 'inclined to provoke or arouse angry feeling'. His behaviour throughout the trial was widely condemned in the days following the verdict of guilty. *Gay News'* editor was given a sentence of nine months suspended for eighteen months, and fined £500. *Gay News* was fined £1000 and costs were awarded against the defendants, who now face a legal bill for more than £10,000. They are appealing against the conviction on 28 different counts.

We hold no illusions about *Gay News*, in many ways it is a sexist newspaper. But it was attacked because it is gay, the prosecution was not just about blasphemy, but about the right of gay people to organise and communicate with each other. The attack on *Gay News* is an attack on all gay people in this country, it is part of the developing backlash against gays – increasing police prosecutions and harassment and increasing attacks in the streets. It is part of the erosion of civil liberties and the increase in physical attacks on blacks, women, and trade unionists as well as lesbians and gay men.

Because of this the gay community has chosen this issue as the point where it is going to make a stand and resist. For the first time in the history of the Gay Movement we are asking for the support of non-gay groups as well as mobilising our own community.

How you can help: take the resolution below to your trade union

branch, trades council, anti-fascist group, womens group or civil liberties group, get it passed and let us know:

*This branch/group deplores the erosion of civil liberties evidenced by the recent use of the antiquated blasphemy law to convict Gay News and its editor Denis Lemon. This branch/group calls for the repeal of the blasphemy law and the quashing of the conviction of Gay News and its editor and urges its members to support the forthcoming national demonstration in London.*

The demonstration will be on Saturday Feb 11, assembling at Temple Embankment at 1 pm. There is a tremendous amount of anger building up over the prosecution and we expect this to be the largest gay demonstration ever in this country.

Donations are urgently needed by the Defence Committee organising the campaign, however large or small.

Affiliate your organisation minimum £5. If you join as an individual pay what you can afford. Over fifty organisations have now affiliated. As well as gay groups these include trades union groups, trades councils, anti-fascist and political groups. Messages of solidarity have been received from the gay movements in Norway, Australia, and even from our persecuted sisters and brothers in fascist Brazil.

The affiliation of non-gay groups has been effective in building up our morale and determination. For anarchists, the self-organisation of an oppressed community is the essence of libertarian politics. Our community has chosen this moment to resist its oppression – give us your support □ Alan Bray

For further information contact: The National Gay News Defence Committee 146 Mayall Road, London SE24. 01 274 01 274-1843.

Zero is affiliated to the Gay News Defence Committee.

## Colchester

### Sexism sabotages Essex conference

The South East and London Anarchist/Libertarian conference, the first to be held since Warwick three years ago, took place over January 27/28/29 at Essex University. Organised on sexual politics and communication, around 150 people took part. We hope it will prove to be a watershed in the anarchist movement's history.

On the Friday night a planning meeting took place to finalise workshops and other conference details. From the hostility with which the already scheduled all women's and all men's workshops were challenged it became clear that confrontation over the issue of sexual politics was likely to dominate the entire weekend end. This was borne out as the workshops got underway, workshops not on sexual politics rarely got beyond hostile conflict over sexism, while workshops on sexual politics were of necessity taken up with discussing what was happening in the conference itself.

The women's workshop began with a coherent supportive discussion in which we tried to clarify the links

between our anarchism and our feminism. On the whole we were in agreement on the need both for an autonomous women's movement and to develop feminism within the anarchist movement. These feelings were not shared by some of the men in the conference who saw no evidence of sexism in the anarchist movement and attached little importance to patriarchal oppression. At times throughout the conference women were belittled and even insulted, and their ideas trivialised. Often by men who claimed to be 'insulted' by our allegations of sexism.

The original idea behind the gay workshop was to discuss ways anarchists in the gay movement could organise, and consider the possibility of forming anarchist gay liberation groups. But in the event discussion centred around the indifference shown to gay politics by straight men at the conference. All in all Saturday was a destructive day. Sunday was more constructive although to a large part it was devoted to re-running the previous day's workshops more



unsuccessful. The symbolic, if not actual, turning point was seeing *Charles & Louise* Sunday night. 80 minutes of anger and miscommunication, punctuated by brief moments of agreement, which had made the argument between them stand out.

Sunday's requirements also included a press workshop dealt with mainly at the bar, in a co-operative and sharing resources, including setting up a working group. On Monday a basis for an anti-racist press network. The precedence of two rounds of the movement's 12 national publicising meeting for the first time was significant to prevent the initial workshop degenerating into the usual three hours of the weekend. Other workshops were held on education, philosophy, organisational and learning for the left.

Some of its same lively deprived through others of us who was however to be more constructive. This was done at the conference at which feminist and homosexual politics stood their own beautiful heads and

refused to go away. There would have been the first conference of a day, a day conference, another police, but not as it was demonstrated that it should be the last of the day. The anarchist movement will not do to accomplish anything until it has come to terms with the oppression of men and women. Towards this there seemed to be general agreement that the next conference, which anarchists from Cambridge offered to organise, should be specifically on sexual politics.

Up had their choice should be speeding to Essex Libs for loving organisation of conference and fund (Oscar Louise Michel, Muesli, Malatesta). Swansea anarchists for running the creche and Riving Free for its bookbus. Finally, for the future, we learnt that the organising group should be given the responsibility of advancing agendas and workshops in advance, and that future conferences should be advertised as antiracist, antihomophobic and antihomophobic.   
 □ Paine, Sharon, Pete, Richard

about 1980 and all change of BFI subsidy by 'going public' on the situation, and at the same time so immersed in the crisis themselves that it was difficult to evaluate the priority of getting information out, it was an irony but fatal mistake. *Time Out* itself, even though it thought the situation serious enough to refuse all TOC advertising artwork not accompanied by cheque, repeatedly held back on the opportunity of reporting on it.

When the builders, Brent Walker, TOC's largest creditor took over a high court writ to secure their outstanding debt, the end followed swiftly. TOC demanded that the BFI decide immediately on its pending application for a £35,000 cash injection with a £20,000 yearly subsidy for two years. As we know the BFI did not provide that support and just 14 months after opening the cinema closed its doors.

How is it that in its screening of Left and feminist films (often films that would find general release elsewhere in Europe), its attempts to bring film makers and film audiences together directly, and its aspirations towards a truly popular cinema the Other Cinema generated so little support? The answer lies in the Left in this country's total diffidence to what it mistakenly calls 'culture'. The Left's continued failure to see in cinema anything other than what is bourgeois, unless a film has overt agitprop content, left TOC in a limbo. Too radical for the BFI and seen as too bourgeois for the Left, support never came from anywhere other than independent film makers themselves. Even Left groups for whom TOC staged benefits did not reciprocate solidarity when it was needed.

The cinema itself is in the process of being sold by the liquidator. Although one bid is likely to come from one of the Other Cinema's founders, now backed by a consortium, it is unlikely that the venue will ever see programmes of the kind TOC ran again. But however much the Left deserves it, revolutionary cinema will not just go away. It seems fairly certain now that the distribution side of TOC will survive the liquidation. Struggling under its own £18,000 deficit (incurred through being overstretched in its efforts to sustain the film programmes of the last year) and trying to steer clear of BFI control, they are organising a string of benefits throughout February and March. And who can be sure that somewhere in the back of their mind, there isn't the dark ambition to sometime, somewhere, show those kind of films again? Next time let's be ready.   
 □ Martin Gingell

## Copenhagen Christiania faces fresh eviction moves

On April Fool's Day 1976 the 'Free Town' of Christiania, Denmark's 700 strong, six year long squat, faced eviction from the government. 30,000 people came to Copenhagen and formed a human chain—hand in hand—around Christiania in a mass symbolic gesture.



Streetlife Christiania style. Waiting for the rain?

The 'Rainbow Army' was formed. Christiansians stayed out.

Now the strategies of Copenhagen's 'tools paradise' are under threat again. The supreme court was scheduled to arrive at a decision in 19th January 1978 on whether to evict. The decision has still not been made, but nobody is in any doubt that it will go against Christiansians.

Christiania is run on a decentralised basis creating between 9 and 11 areas out of the land. Each area has its own meetings and there is interaction between area meetings and larger Common Meetings. Common Meetings usually occur when there is some particularly critical situation. There are no leaders, and a lack of committees, but meetings are badly attended. Separate Working Groups deal with economics, information, negotiations, community action, and so on. Word-of-mouth is the main and best means of communication, although there are 3 newspapers—both 'internal' and 'external'—plus a radio station.

People live from crafts, student grants, or outside part-time jobs. Very few are on the dole. Inside, short hours and low pay ensures more 'employment'. Christiansians houses enterprises as diverse as a bakery (bread and rolls from 5 am), a cobbler, a 'permanent jumble-sale' to a sauna, bath-house, a creche, kindergarten and embryonic 'school' to municipal services—rubbish collection, rubbish emptying and street cleaning.

On the outside, the Support Christiania Group has some tactics planned should an eviction attempt be made. The main aim seems to be to stretch police resources to the full. A situation is envisaged where the ratio of police to protesters is 1:10. To this aim a 'telephone tree' exists which would call up thousands of people (including abroad) should any mass-mobilisation suddenly seem necessary. The 'tree' would also organize food, blankets, and other essentials. Certain people are already on 'stand-by' expecting calls to go to decentralised depots and collect already printed posters and handbills—ready for posting onto lorries, buses, trains, police cars. There are radio transmitters ready to break into normal radio channels. It is assumed the police will try to surround the area and cut it off from the arriving support. Plans exist to distract forces away from Christiania and thereby ease access. To add to this, some reports state that the Police Union is against involvement in mass eviction at Christiania. Other trade unions with members who would be involved in demolition, have also expressed support for Christiania.

Nevertheless the future of Christiania remains in jeopardy, as much from within as from without. Much of the information coming out of the 'Free Town' has stressed the need for 'non-violent resistance'. If, as seems likely, this stress derives more from 60s style optimism rather than a 70s non-violent anarchism, the end of Christiania may come about more from tactical ineffectiveness than the combined force of army and police, who are in the last resort unlikely to disobey orders and side with Christiania against the state.   
 □ Pete Brawne

## London

### Christmas on the dole for Other Cinema

The sudden folding of the Other Cinema on Day 16 (just a few hours before it was due to premiere the major new feminist film *John's Wedding*) was not just a bitter Christmas present for the staff of London's only collectively run cinema, but also raised a question mark over the future of radical independent cinema in this country. The decision to close came just three days after the British Film Institute, at an emergency meeting of its governing board, rededicated its refusal to provide the Other Cinema with a cash injection. The BFI's decision was relayed to the 200 strong picket of Other Cinema supporters waiting outside the BFI's Dean Street headquarters in the following statement: "Over the past six months the BFI have been examining the situation and will continue to examine the situation to see if it can be of any possible assistance. However, it is clear that the BFI is unable to make any financial contribution on a scale to satisfy the cinema's current needs."

Dole does not have to look far to find the reasons for the BFI's complicity and cynicism. It is no secret that ever since the setting up of the Other Cinema in 1970, the BFI has been reluctant to finance the Official state funding agency for independent cinema has never been embraced by the somewhat parallel, and equally radical, activities of the Other Cinema. The more serious the Other Cinema's lived direct successes with films *Whistling*, *Roadies of the Spinnies*, *After Hinton* (that the BFI had then produced).

Started by Peter Sainsbury and Nick Hart Williams in 1970 with just a handful of films given free by Jean-Luc Godard and sympathetic Latin American directors, the Other Cinema (TOC) slowly established a strong catalogue of left, feminist and experimental films which included *Battle of Algiers* and *Ireland Behind the Veil*. Zero-rated, with, additionally, presented TOC as the distributors of *Whistling* and *La Caccia*. Over the next five years it collected itself, began regular Sunday film nights at the College, housed the empty Kings Cross Cinema to premiere *Battle of Algiers*, and in the process set up lights on independent cinema. After months of looking around TOC took its position on the base of the new Finsbury Cinema in Tottenham Street, the site of the old Scala, and launched a massive fund-raising appeal to find the £40,000 required to turn it from a cinema shell into a fully equipped cinema. In June 1976, under increasing pressure from the cinema's backers (National Car Park) to take up of re-opening the lease, TOC

went ahead, with the appeal fund standing at an apparent £37,000. The cinema opened on Dec 16 '76 with a stunning programme of films of which the centrepiece was the new BFI feature *Whistling*. With the telegrams and the optimism, and steady box-office receipts, it seemed no mistake at the time that the fundraising should lapse. Later TOC was to find out that not only had the final cost of fitting and equipping the cinema risen to some £62,000, but that the appeal fund showed an unexpected shortfall. The cinema itself broke almost even from the start, but the severe cash flow problem presented by this initial capital deficit was to dog it relentlessly month after month, and finally force it into liquidation.

In Dec '76 TOC approached the BFI to see if clear of its difficulties. The BFI responded by setting up a working party to "examine management of the Other Cinema in relationship to the financial situation and programming policy". The working party took till May to report, by which time the TOC, collectively had all taken a voluntary 20% wage-cut. The report was wholly unacceptable. Reading between the lines the message was clear. If the BFI gave any support at all it would be limited, and then only in exchange for some sort of control. The conditions seemed to be the abandonment of collective management and not 'going public' on its financial affairs. In short the BFI saw the responsibility for TOC's future (and, in terms of individual private support without explaining how it could be enlisted without publicising the situation).

The cinema had other problems too. The attendance slump which all cinema face over the summer was under way, there were frictions between the distribution and cinema sides of the collective, but more acute was the programming situation. The lull in independent film making over the last two years was causing the supply of suitable features to dry up. This problem was made worse by the fact that TOC had little or no money with which to secure the new films that were available.

September saw the launch of an abortive 'Save The Other Cinema' campaign. The posters, applying no other information than the campaign slogan, must have gone a long way to convincing people that the TOC crisis was not a serious one. Unsurprisingly the campaign netted just £1000. Most people still did not know London was about to lose its only left and feminist film venue. For a deprived collective, split over the need to jeopardise both

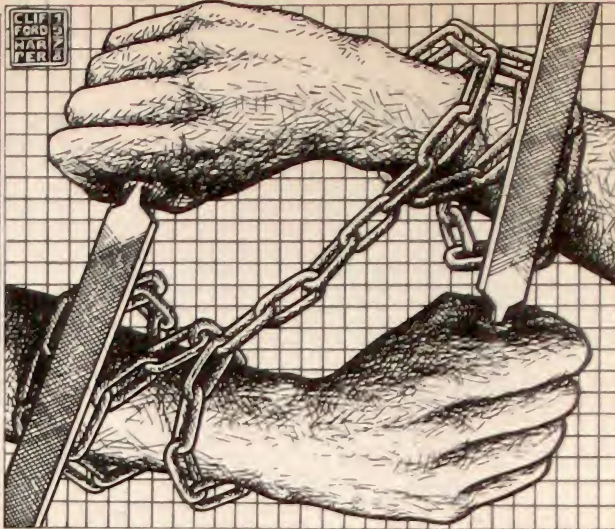


## Spain

### 'Common' prisoners organise for total amnesty

Riots have been a persistent feature of prison life in Spain for the last ten years. During this time seven people have been killed and many seriously injured. The most recent wave of rioting originated the summer before last when, on July 28, the government declared an amnesty for political prisoners which totally ignored 'common' prisoners. As news of their exclusion from the amnesty spread prisoners reacted by going onto the roofs to demonstrate their anger. They also began to talk about organising. As a result of the disturbances thirty four prisoners were transferred to other prisons, mainly to the central prison at Ocaña, thirty miles south of Madrid, where the organisation begun on the roofs acquired strength, and COPEL (Coordinadora de Presos Espanoles en Lucha—Coordination of the Prison Struggle) was formed to unite prisoners across Spain in revolt against their subhuman living conditions. And when these prisoners were moved again the movement spread with them. In January this year COPEL issued its first manifesto, *The Demands of COPEL*, calling for the abolition of Franco's laws and prisons in favour of a popular justice.

**COPEL demands:** 1. A major reform of the Penal Code and the Law of Judicial Procedure, to bring justice to the people. At present justice is a thing exclusively for the use of the ruling class. 2. The abolition of military tribunals, the Law of Social Danger and the Law of Public Health. The sole purpose of these laws is to legitimise dictatorship and repression. 3. The abolition of Franco's prison codes. The legalisation of prisoners' associations to



watch over our rights and to bring their infringement to public attention. Democratic rights in all prisons. 4. The removal of all magistrates, public prosecutors, judges, police and prison officers appointed by Franco, regardless of rank. The creation of juries chosen from the people. The creation of popular commissions directly in charge of prisons. 5. While a new prison code is being prepared, major improvements

should be made in sanitation, hygiene and prison food, and in prisoners' contact with the outside. The inhuman punishment cells should be closed. The exploitation in the workshops should be ended. The prisoners transferred as a result of the events at Carabanchel last February should be immediately returned. 6. COPEL does not regard prison reform as its ultimate objective, although it does see it as a necessary stage. Its ultimate objective is to open prisons up. They should cease to be places of punishment. They should be places where someone who has committed a crime would be treated as a human being with physical and emotional needs, and with rights which must be respected in all circumstances. 7. We are outcasts. We have been judged and condemned with impunity by openly fascist tribunals and under unjust laws. We have a right to amnesty, to give us an equal part in the building of a more just social system. Finally our principal aims are: to establish a basis of organisation for all the prisoners of the state, to struggle within the prisons for our demands, and to be part of the struggle of all people against 'reformed dictatorship' and towards democracy and socialism.

At the beginning of June 77 COPEL called a strike. Immediately a thousand prisoners struck in the workshops and some fifteen hundred prisoners commenced hunger-strike. Prisoners' families began, for the first time, to take part in COPEL organisation (12 were subsequently imprisoned for their part). To draw attention to the strike demands COPEL members repeatedly cut their wrists in court rooms whenever called to appear. The strike was called off during the election campaign and all political parties involved were called on to recognise the demands of the prisoner prisoners. 'But it got us nowhere. They have done nothing for us, only Accion Comunista and the CNT have helped us. The rest—nothing. But why should we expect them to help, or even understand us, as they never helped us when they were prisoners themselves? People like Camacho, Sartorius, Sanchez Montero, Lobarto (all trade union leaders or Communists) who have spent so many years behind bars, ignore us as if we were filth without even the right to live... yet, they have been criminals just like us, for having broken unjust laws... or is it that they were convicted by fascist tribunals and we were not?'

Since the major riot at Carabanchel

that occurred last February, serious rioting has spread to prisons throughout Spain from Basauri to Cordoba, Barcelona to El Puerto each supported by growing popular feeling outside. An anarchist prisoners support group, formed within the CNT, questioning the existence of prisons at all in a recent explanation of what they were doing, said 'It can only be hypocrisy to suggest that prisoners in them. If one thing is clear it must be that prisons do neither—rather, as has often been said, they corrupt those inside them. Prison is society's ultimate and most brutal defence against those who undermine its norms. Prisons, like other institutions of society, are closely bound up with 'normality'—in this case the norm of law. 'Normality' and 'legality' are defined by the powerful, in their own interests. The 'legality' of the powerful inevitably creates its opposition, 'crime'. Normality, law and crime are only concepts defined by those in power for their own purpose. If you reject the society they presuppose, they become meaningless. Support for the prisoners struggle is a great deal more than an act of charity, it is an indispensable part of the struggle against power and exploitation.'

Edited and translated from *Bicicleta* by Alan Bray.

COPEL staged a further demonstration in their campaign for complete amnesty on Jan 17, when 200 prisoners at Barcelona's Modelo prison cut their wrists or swallowed dangerous objects. The remaining 800 prisoners began a simultaneous hunger strike.

## Leeds

### First Northern anarchist-feminist conference

November 19/20 saw the first Northern anarchist-feminist conference, in Leeds' Swarthmore Centre. Although not widely publicised 40 women attended from all over the North of England, a good size for a conference: not big enough to be fraught and impersonal. Rather than having workshops on specific subjects the conference was organised in small groups which stayed together throughout the weekend. This seemed to work very well, working through the agenda together rather than having to choose between different workshops. You felt part of a group, talk flowed very easily from issue to issue, always returning to our own experience, and we were all sorry to split up at the end.

Discussion centred on two broad areas. The first around questions of lifestyle—problems of working with/ living with men, with women, issues around sexuality, monogamy and jealousy, many of us were trying or had tried to live in non-exclusive relationships, and though our responses varied widely, could sympathise with one another's struggles, child-care, especially the problems of mothers and children living collectively. We talked alot about children—the difficulty of getting people to take real collective responsibility for them, our own feelings of possessiveness.

The second major area of concern was the complex of issues around rape, violence and the struggle against fascism. We discussed our experiences of violence, sexual and other assaults, together with our own fears. Some of us tended to look for non-violent responses while others were willing in theory to hurt men badly, although our experience was that we were in general incapable of violent self-defence, our

deep conditioning overriding our feminist decisions. Many of us had been been critical of Zero printing the London Anti-Rape group's statement uncritically. Although we agree that rape must be recognised as a crime we felt it wrong for feminists and anarchists not to admit to any doubts about using the police, courts and prison to deal with rape.

The final plenary session consisted of (hard to summarize) general discussion of the direction of the anarchy-feminist movement (or whatever). Although very positive, the issues got really tangled and women obviously did have quite deep disagreements. Some women felt we should be getting into more action, others wanted to see the development of clearer revolutionary theory. There was some debate around the idea of working out theory—some sisters seeing in theory the beginning of a monolithic anarchy-feminist 'line' and others seeing descent into vagueness and confusion in its absence. Again, to what extent does our use of the word 'anarchism' tie us to the male anarchist tradition? There was a general feeling that 'old anarchists' should be read with a feminist consciousness for what is useful in them, but most women who attended would see patriarchy as the most fundamental form of oppression, and authoritarian behaviour as having its roots in the patriarchal family, a perspective which clearly necessitates considerable revision of traditional anarchism. I think everyone found the conference, and its social (with Clapperclaw) constructive and enjoyable.

We decided to convene another conference for early this year. (Other regions organise them for yourselves!)

□ Sophie Laws

## International

### Heseltine and Bryant get just desserts

Ever felt like squelching a gooey, sticky, cream topped pie right in the face of one—or more—of the bosses and media stars who manage modern life? Affirmative? Then read with caution. Pieing leading public shiteheads has been a regular recourse of America's dispossessed ever since the emergence of the Yippie movement, but until the Anarchist Party of Canada (Groucho-Marxist) called for an International Pie Week for November 4-11, no attempt had been made to unleash an offensive nationwide.

Friday November 4 saw the first action as Watergate conspirator Frank Sturgis gets a pie as he leaves a New York courthouse. Unlucky preperson Aron Kay is caught while making his escape. (Two days later Kay urged 'Let a thousand pies fly' during a San Francisco smoke in and was immediately pied himself). On the Monday Canadian Groucho-Marxists of the APC(G-M) dramatically splat federal cabinet minister Marc Lalonde with a Bug Cream pie. In Vancouver three days later cabinet minister Ron Basford is next victim of a pie in the face. Basford had recently signed extradition papers on American Indian Movement militant Leonard Peltier, sending him back to face two life sentences. Responsibility for the action was claimed by the New Questioning Coyote Brigade. The same day yet another cell of the APC(G-M) strikes in Regina, close to the American border.

A meeting is taking place called by the President of Robinhood Multifoods to defend the shooting of seven strikers at his Montreal flour mills. During the meeting a Groucho-Marxist walks onto

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Des Moines, Iowa. Before and after as Anita Bryant gets hers yot

the stage and scores a direct hit. Next to taste the wrath of pie throwers is provincial welfare minister Bill Vander Zalm. By the end of pie week, the North American press were getting very flustered over this new and sinister form of guerrilla warfare. Headlines read 'Harmless pie throwers possible assassins' and calls were made for pie control laws.

Finale of the week came as the national conservative party leader Joe Clark arrived for an official visit to Vancouver. At an airport press conference, while confidently surrounded by bodyguards, he scoffed at the idea of falling victim to an apple and cream surprise. A short while later a member of the New Questioning Coyote Brigade pushed through Clarke's bodyguard and bounced a coconut cream off him.

The Pieing of the Year had, however, already taken place a few weeks before International Pie Week. Anita Bryant,

american anti-gay crusader and generally one of the most unpleasant people in the universe, was attending a press conference in Des Moines, Iowa. While talking about the ideas behind her proposed 'homosexual rehabilitation centers', pieperson Tom Higgins stepped up and... nice photo ain't it? A sobbing Bryant made an undignified exit, praying.

Action wasn't all overseas; shadow secretary for the environment, our very own Michael Heseltine, connected with an apple pie covered in cream just as he finished a lunchtime speech at Leeds University on November 4. As he sat down anarchist student Herbert Dixon stepped forward and aimed his pie. Heseltine managed to deflect some pie onto the floor by shielding his face but sustained dollops of cream on his suit and hair. Incensed students of the University's Conservative Association, who had organised the meeting, chased after Dixon as he raced through the rear exit but failed to catch him up.

□ Pete Webb

## London



## Eight arrests as police disperse Stammheim demonstration

Eight people are to appear in court from March 21-23, after being arrested on a demonstration in London on December 10, held to protest against the murders of the RAF prisoners in Stammheim and Stadelheim prisons.

About 200 people took part in the march, which had been organised by the Black Aid group as part of an international day of action. There were a large number of police present throughout.

After a few comrades had been allowed to hand in a list of demands to the German Embassy, including the immediate release of Irmgard Moeller who survived the Stammheim killings, and of Klaus Croissant, one time lawyer of some of the RAF prisoners, now himself facing a life (or death) sentence in Stammheim, the police informed us 'you've had your little march so now you can all go home'. The march was then split in two by the police, with a

group of around 40 of us being told to continue marching, while the rest were told to disperse.

Those told to continue decided to head for the nearest tube station. About 100 yards from the station the police again stopped us and told everyone to split up into groups of 2 or 3 before we could go any further. A scuffle started as they began to forcibly take down the few flags and banners people were still holding. Then the pigs let fly, arresting or beating up anyone they felt like doing.

The 8 arrested were taken to Gerald Road station, while other people were pushed down into the tube and onto the nearest train. Of those arrested 7 have been charged with obstruction and one with assault. Two German comrades have had their passports taken by the police. All have pleaded not guilty and been remanded on bail after two court appearances. □

## News shorts

Longstanding militant, writer and founder of the international anarchist review *Interrogations*, Louis Mercier Vega, suicided on November 26, at the age of 63, in France. Founding *Interrogations* in 1974, he ran the review for its first two years before passing control over the 'Italian management' of the Turin collective. Determined that he himself would decide the conclusion of his activism rather than physical or mental deterioration, he had announced to close friends shortly before his death that in 1973 he had taken a decision to live four years. An anarchist militant from youth, he was a founding member of the International Group of the Durrutti column, fighting in Saragosa, Sietamo, Farlete and Peroliguera. With the crushing of Republican Spain he worked tirelessly in support of Spanish comrades, eventually taking refuge in South America at the start of the second world war. On returning to France, Mercier Vega concentrated his work for twenty years on observation and analysis of Latin American society. Apart from these writings (he also wrote under the names Santiago Parane and Charles Ridel—names reflecting his Chilean/French origins) he is best known for his book *L'Inceivable anarchisme* (Resurgent Anarchism), published in 1970. He died at a point when, although tired, friends knew him to be happy, strong and confident in *Interrogations'* new collective. The forthcoming *Interrogations* 13 contains, in tribute, an interview with Mercier Vega, together with his essay 'Affinity Groups', one of the first studies of the organisational problem within the specific anarchist movement.

Three days before Christmas at the Old Bailey Anarchist Black Cross members Phil Ruff, Dave Campbell and Brian Gibbons were each given a harsh seven years on counts of armed robbery and possession of firearms following the hold up of a Lewisham betting shop last October at which all three were arrested. Currently in Wormwood Scrubs the three face serving, with remission, at least three years, unless their appeal is successful. Phil Ruff is a writer on the Anarchist Black Cross paper *Black Flag* and Dave Campbell is a member of the Cockayne folk group.

Milanese author and friend of Duchamp, Arturo Schwartz, the only person ever to have slapped Tristan Tzara's face and shout 'Stalinist bastard!' simultaneously, stopped off in London recently on his way to Canada and the United States to finalise details for the launching of a new anarchist cultural magazine *Anarchos*. Schwartz said the magazine would come out four times a year, a single theme to each issue, and should include writing by Bookchin, Marcuse and Chomsky. Plans already exist for an English language edition if *Anarchos* meets with Italian success.

The anniversary of the charges against Crispin Aubrey, John Berry and Duncan Campbell, who are thought to have originally incurred the wrath of the British Defence establishment by their suggestion that Britain's own Signals Intelligence (SIGINT) was largely under the thumb of the American National Security Agency, occurs on February 19. A glance at Agitprop shows that the ABC Defence Campaign plans to celebrate the anniversary in its own special way. So too the Special Branch. They spent the end of the month visiting a large number of people connected with *The Leveller* and *Peace News* informing them that both magazines were to be charged with contempt of court for publishing the name of the mysterious Colonel 'B', prosecution witness at Aubrey, Berry and Campbell's

committal hearing last November. Colonel 'B' is of course, as readers of the Dec '74 issue of the Royal Signals magazine *Wire* will know, Colonel H.A. Johnstone ex-Royal Signals now with Army General Staff D124 (ie SIGINT). *Peace News* and *The Leveller* need our support, initially by all anti-authoritarian papers reprinting in solidarity. It is no coincidence that the threatened magazines have the largest circulation of all the anti-authoritarian press.

Currently sustaining the fullest force of racism in this country, the Asian community has the least developed political consciousness of its own experience and identity of all black groups. Until recently the choice facing Asian militants has been to work either with the South Asian left or with the left here, both inadequate in terms of dealing with racism in Britain [eighteen months ago IS [SWP now] lost three quarters of its black caucus following the relegation of its campaign against racism in favour of the Right To Work]. However the setting up of Asian women's centres in Manchester and Battersea, and, more recently, the launching of *Mukti*, an English language Asian militant paper for Southall youth, are signs that this is now changing. Produced by a group of Indian, Pakistani and Singalese militants meeting since last June, the pilot issue of *Mukti* (Liberation) sold out soon after it appeared in December. Despite the favourable response to the pilot issue the collective was left critical of its own political position, which it saw as having too many residues of white analysis, rather than black experience, of racism. Having taken the interim months to develop in a more black nationalist direction, *Mukti* will appear regularly from March, and can be contacted c/o Hortus Road, Southall, Middlesex (01-328 5338) □

## Zero5

*Zero* is an anarchist/anarcha-feminist newsmagazine produced by a mixed collective, mainly from East London (see Anarchism/Feminism in *Zero* 1 for a statement of our ideas). *Zero* is looking for streetsellers (pick up *Zero* from Rising Free—cash returned against unsold copies) and distributors abroad. Contact us through address below.

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★ Sorry for this issue's lateness. In one or two issues time *Zero* will be printing an Anti-authoritarian Yellow Pages as a special supplement. All activities/campaigns/magazines/press/organisations/groups who see themselves as anti-authoritarian should send us the following information on a filing card, regardless of whether they have been listed in agitprop, as soon as possible: 1) Name of group; 2) Brief description of activities and/or other necessary information; 3) Updated contact address/phone no.



# IN THE BELLY

Anti-authoritarian Revolutionary Movement: Draft Theses For Principles Of Unity originated as a xeroxed discussion statement circulated through imperialism, 'in the belly of the beast', the ARM statement has obvious relevance for us here. It is the outcome of the concern of various, already on a basis for closer forms of cooperation between anarchist/libertarian groups. In other words an anti-authoritarian revolutionary movement, although the revolutionary anti-authoritarian position consists in and how it differentiates from a Marxist-Leninist one. After more than a year in circulation the experience. Although most feedback came from people who were in broad agreement, and discussion centred around ways of expanding and clarifying on the other hand was strongly supportive. For our part, we hope that further developments of the statement include a more fundamental recognition

**1** THE TASK OF REVOLUTIONARIES IS TO MAKE THE REVOLUTION. THE TASK OF REVOLUTIONARIES IN THE UNITED STATES IS TO MAKE THE REVOLUTION HERE.

Nobody else can do it for us, and it is for ourselves that we make the revolution—all of us, as comrades and equals, together.

**2** THERE HAS BEEN NO SUCCESSFUL WORKING CLASS REVOLUTION IN ANY ADVANCED INDUSTRIAL COUNTRY.

The nearest thing, in recent years, have been the unsuccessful attempts of 1968, in France and Czechoslovakia.

**3** THE SUCCESSFUL COMMUNIST PARTY LED REVOLUTIONS OF THE 20TH CENTURY, BEGINNING WITH THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION OF 1917, HAVE ALL OCCURRED IN UNDERDEVELOPED AND/OR COLONIAL COUNTRIES.

The strategy and tactics of those revolutions, the structure of the Communist parties, and the development of state power after those revolutions all reflect that fact. It is no accident that a communist movement modeled after and dominated by the Russian example, have been uniformly unsuccessful in making the revolution in an advanced industrial society. In those advanced industrial countries like France, Italy, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, and by now—Russia—where Communist parties hold strong positions of power, whether in the government or, supposedly, in the opposition, they have played not a revolutionary role, but usually a conservative, or at most reformist, role, and often a clearly counterrevolutionary one.

**4** COMMUNISM—FROM EACH ACCORDING TO THEIR ABILITY, TO EACH ACCORDING TO THEIR NEED—IS NOT POSSIBLE UNDER CONDITIONS OF SCARCITY. IT IS ONLY POSSIBLE AFTER THE PRODUCTIVE FORCES HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED TO THE DEGREE WHERE IMPORTANT GENUINE NEEDS CAN IN FACT BE MET.

Scarcity and the need for capital development create and continually recreate inequality, privilege, exploitation, and coercion. The great historical task of the revolutionary liberation struggles in the underdeveloped world is that development of the productive forces which in the West was carried out by capitalism and the bourgeois revolution. In the era of imperialism, that task can no longer be carried out by the national bourgeoisie in a "free enterprise" framework. The economic and state forms established by the Communist Party—led revolutions do not come after capitalism, but essentially *instead* of classical capitalism. They initiate a development which, in the case of the Soviet Union, has led not towards communism but towards relations of production and forms of organization increasingly similar to the bureaucratic monopoly capitalism of the United States. Developments in China, in spite of important differences and especially the heroic popular struggles in the cultural revolution

**5** THE REVOLUTIONARY LIBERATION FIGHTERS IN THE THIRD WORLD ARE OUR COMRADES AND ALLIES IN OUR COMMON STRUGGLE AGAINST THE COMMON ENEMY—THE U.S. IMPERIALIST RULING CLASS.

They, too, are in a struggle for us, because they weaken the stronghold of the imperialist economic system, which oppresses us as well as them. In weakening the imperialist ability to rule, they create the preconditions for our successful revolution; they destroy the myth of the ruling class's invincibility and give us confidence in our ability to overthrow it. Our resistance, in turn, aids their struggle by weakening the effectiveness and

reliability of the imperialist military, technological and administrative machine.

**6** WE ARE BOUND TOGETHER IN COMRADESHIP AND SOLIDARITY.

**7** BUT THE TASKS AND PROBLEMS OF OUR REVOLUTION ARE VERY DIFFERENT FROM THEIRS, AND THE STRATEGY, TACTICS, AND ORGANIZATIONAL FORMS OF THEIR STRUGGLE DO NOT, IN GENERAL, FORM MODELS FOR US.

We can and must learn from their experience, as we must learn from the experience of all revolutionary struggles in human history. But the strategy, tactics, and organizational forms of the revolutionary struggle in advanced industrial society must flow primarily from the conditions of that society and from the experiences of our own struggle, not from the study of theory and practice derived from the revolutionary struggles of underdeveloped societies—even if that practice were successful there.

SUPPORT AND SOLIDARITY ARE NOT PRIMARILY A MATTER OF ADMIRATION OR IMITATION. THE GREATEST SERVICE WE CAN RENDER THE PEOPLES OF THE THIRD WORLD IS TO MAKE A REVOLUTION HERE—IN THE BELLY OF THE BEAST, FOR IN FREEDOM OURSELVES, WE GET OUR IMPERIALIST RULING CLASS OFF THEIR BACKS. AND HOW BETTER CAN WE REPAY THEM FOR THE BLOWS THEY STRIKE TO HELP US BY FREEDING THEMSELVES?

**8** THE TASK OF OUR REVOLUTION IS TO DESTROY THE ECONOMIC POWER OF THE MONOPOLY CAPITALIST RULING CLASS, TO SMASH ITS POLITICAL SYSTEM OF DOMINATION WITHIN THE METROPOLIS—THE BOURGEOIS STATE—AND WITH IT TO DESTROY ALL FORMS OF OPPRESSION AND DOMINATION OF HUMAN BEINGS OVER EACH OTHER. OUR TASK IS TO REPLACE THE CLASS SOCIETY OF DOMINATION OF THE MANY IN THE INTEREST OF THE FEW, BY THE CLASSLESS COMMUNIST SOCIETY OF FREE AND EQUAL HUMAN BEINGS.

The economic precondition for Communism—the development of the productive forces to the stage where all important genuine needs can potentially be met—already exists in advanced industrial societies. Our primary task is *not* the further development of productive forces, or to increase the efficiency or total amount of industrial production. IT IS TO OVERTURN THE CAPITALIST EXPLOITATIVE AND OPPRESSIVE RELATIONS OF PRODUCTION. It is to turn production from profitable waste and profitable engines of destruction to the satisfaction of human needs. It is to liberate ourselves from slavery to an economic system run wild in the insane pursuit of profit and power for the minority capitalist ruling class, to liberate ourselves from the systems of material, physical, and psychological domination, which function to keep us in that state of economic slavery; to liberate ourselves from the dehumanization and alienation of all life and all social relations which result from that system.

OUR REVOLUTION WILL NOT REPLACE ONE SET OF ORGANIZERS, ADMINISTRATORS, RULERS, BY ANOTHER SET ON THE GROUNDS THAT THE SECOND SET IS BETTER EQUIPPED TO RUN THINGS "FOR US", IN OUR INTEREST. THE PROLETARIAT—WHICH IS THE VAST MAJORITY IN ADVANCED INDUSTRIAL SOCIETY—WILL RUN THINGS COLLECTIVELY BY OURSELVES, AS EQUALS, AS WELL AS FOR OURSELVES. WORKING CLASS POWER IS THE SELF-DETERMINATION OF THE VAST MAJORITY, NOT THE DICTATORSHIP OF A VANGUARD PARTY, IN THE NAME OF THE WORKING CLASS, OVER THE WORKING CLASS, OR THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OVER THE PARTY, OR THE POLITBUREAU OVER THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OVER THE PARTY, OR THE POLITBUREAU OVER THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE, OR THE "LEADER" OVER THE POLITBUREAU.

**9** THE SYSTEM OF PHYSICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL DOMINATION, WHICH FUNCTIONS TO KEEP US IN THE STATE OF ECONOMIC SLAVERY IN THIS SOCIETY, IS HIERARCHY AND AUTHORITARIANISM IN ALL ITS FORMS.

Its main expressions in this society are the racism, sexism, and ageism which oppress and separate us and set us against each other, and the *affirmation* which conditions the vast majority of us to be conformist passive followers of experts, bureaucrats and self-promoted "leaders", or the "competence" to rise in the hierarchy and become "leaders" or "vanguards" ourselves. The struggle against hierarchy and authoritarianism is both external and internal—that is, against our oppression by the enemy, and against the conditioning in ourselves and in the movement. Most of us are aware of the need to struggle against the racism and sexism in the movement and in ourselves—even though the struggle often gets little more than lip service. But the profoundly reactionary role of elitism and vanguardism in our movement has not yet been recognized. We rationalize and reinforce our conditioning to conform to hierarchical structures by parroting the great conspiracy and structural forms derived from the struggle in underdeveloped societies. (Examples: The acquisition of the language and manipulation "vanguard" consciousness with elitist "models", as exemplified in Lenin's *Leftist To Be Done*, published in Russia in 1902, at a time when even elementary literacy was the privilege of the upper classes; or the exaggerated respect and veneration for the "vanguard" in the "left" enough—need for security from the past, and which really arose in fact and myth, the role of the "vanguard" organization from the "masses" and of the "leadership" from the "masses".)

**10** THE PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION IN ADVANCED INDUSTRIAL SOCIETY WILL BE PROFOUNDLY EGALITARIAN, ANTI-AUTHORITARIAN, AND LIBERATING IN ITS AIMS AND ITS RESULTS. ONLY A REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT THAT REFLECTS AND EXPRESSES THIS IN ITS STRATEGY, ITS TACTICS, AND ITS ORGANIZATIONAL FORMS, CAN MAKE A REAL CONTRIBUTION TO SUCH A REVOLUTION.

The A.R.M. must function through self-organized responsible cooperation between equals, irrespective of racial, sexual, or age divisions, based on comradely respect for people and for differences. We recognize that in the absence of valid models, none has a blueprint of how to make the revolution; and that diversity, initiative and experimentation among serious people—respecting and supporting each other—are a strength, not



Illustration: Larkin



# OF THE BEAST

Seattle's Left Bank Bookstore in September '75. Although generated very much from the experience of living on the inside of American society, loosely connected, activist groups around Seattle (including the Left Bank project) to develop a viable anti-authoritarian revolutionary politic as a result it expressly is not the intention of the ARM statement to start an organisation but to contribute to organisation through discussing what a revolutionary original statement has been revised and updated (March '77) into a second draft incorporating a year's suggestions, criticisms and fresh clarifying the statement, there was strong disagreement from several groups over its support for guerilla action.<sup>1</sup> Feedback from imprisoned guerillas rejection of patriarchy. Meanwhile Zero prints it for the first time in the UK, to initiate discussion and criticism, and above all, to help get it together.

a weakness. We also recognize that the development of honest comradely relations as equals, based on mutual responsibility, trust, and respect, is no small task. We are all conditioned to the racist, sexist, ageist and elitist stereotypes, and to the authoritarian pattern of contempt and hatred for other people and for ourselves, which make us take manipulation, and lying to each other and fucking each other over, as matters of course in relations between people. *The struggle to develop and maintain responsibility and respect in relations with people is an ongoing most important part of our internal struggle. Without it the movement is doomed to neurotic ego-tripping fuck-up ineffectuality, or to follow-the-leader mindless authoritarianism.*

10

The revolution is a protracted ongoing process, and we are in its early stages. Organizational forms and forms of struggle will change and develop with experience and experimentation. Right now, all we can say are some principles which seem to us to follow from current experience and from the considerations of points 1-9 in [8].

Organizationally, we believe that the best form for the present is autonomous small affinity groups and networks freely communicating with and supporting each other. This seems to give the best chance for initiative and growth, and experimentation, as well as the best defense against repression and infiltration. Gradually, with experience, and as the struggle develops, closer working relations based on equality and mutual respect will develop between these groups.

We believe that both aboveground and underground forms of struggle are needed. In general, we favor direct or direct action of mass and oppressed people that have a liberating effect, both materially and psychologically, that opens up possibilities of initiative and freedom, personal growth and independence from the system, that

lead to solidarity and mutual support and increased self-confidence among the oppressed—that is, the large majority of us. We support struggles and actions that rock the boat; that disturb the working of the empire and the state; that kick the shins out from under the system and help bring it down; that weaken the ability of the ruling class to govern, and tend to destroy its confidence.

We criticize and oppose forms of struggle and tendencies that would place reliance on the system, tend to institutionalize the "opposition" within the system, or provide careers for "movement leaders" within the system. We oppose tendencies that counteract people's disillusionment and tend to restore their faith in the working of the system, or that tend to encourage leadership or passive dependence on a "vanguard" or on "gurus" in the movement.

Thus we support all struggles of third world peoples in the U.S. against the oppressive racist hierarchy of this system; we support the struggle of women and gay people against the sexist authoritarian structure and for personal freedom—while criticizing and combatting tendencies towards cooptation or toward vanguardism and elitism arising in all of these struggles.

We support the struggle of young people against the ageist and sexist patriarchal authority system, and equally the struggle of old and young alike against the oppressive age segregation and phony youth cult inculcated by the system which degrades people into commodities and tools to be sold, used, discarded and replaced by the shiny new model.

We support the economic and social struggles of poor and working people and oppose their bureaucratic containment within the workings of the system, whether by CIA-controlled labor unions or poverty bureaucracies.

We are all prisoners in this society, but we especially support the struggle for freedom of all those locked down in the over prison and "asylum" of the system.

We believe in the people arming themselves and learning how to use arms as the ultimate defense against the repressive measures of the authoritarian ruling class (remember Chile!) and against the rise of a new repressive force. We support a wide variety of tactics (use your imagination!), including both non-violent direct action as well as sabotage and guerilla actions as forms of popular struggle against the system. While being conscious of the inherent danger of slight tendencies arising in clandestine conspiratorial organization, and criticizing and combatting the vanguardism and elitist false consciousness often expressed by existing underground groups, we give critical support to these groups and defend them unconditionally against the repressive onslaught of the state.<sup>2</sup>

11

WE ARE A REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT, AND THE TASK OF REVOLUTIONARIES IS TO GET IT TOGETHER.<sup>4</sup>

NOTES







# loving trusting Queers in revolt

Laurieston Gay Men's Week 1977 has been described as both the last spasm of the 'counter culture' G.L.F. and as the beginnings of a new interest in the politics of personal liberation. The gay movement, as a mass movement, no longer exists, many gay people have seen the limitations of purely 'gay' liberation and in their search for a 'wider' politics have been co-opted by the straight marxist left. For those who see personal liberation as the corner

stone to social revolution marxism offers no refuge and there have been few places to go since the collapse of G.L.F. in the early seventies. The Laurieston conference has left a strong impression with many of us who were there, but it's impossible to say if it 'worked'. Here, Jamie Lupin, one of the originators of the idea, talks about his politics and his feelings about the week.

For eight days, from May 28 to June 5, between 25 and 35 gay men lived together in Laurieston Hall. Men had heard about it through various haphazard channels, and came to find out what it was all about. 'It' turned out to be 'us'. We discovered that our lives and politics were a pretty haphazard cross-section of mostly middle-class, mainly English, white gay men. Our politics varied from liberalism to anarchism, with CHE activists, socialists, Marxists and men committed to (ef)feminism, and those who took bits of each to make up our own minds. Our ages ranged from 20 to 50, our knowledge of each other from zero to lover and everything between and beyond that. For myself, I knew that activist radical gay men had a struggle which is peculiarly ours, not together with women but close to feminism. It seemed important that we come together, and if nothing else, at least express our mutual confusion.

We sat in a circle on the lawn, the first Saturday afternoon, and wondered why we were all there. I needed to talk over my own feelings of anxiety about being expected to be some kind of leader, about the cost and financial problems of the event, and about my feelings of responsibility. The reaction of the group was comforting—I felt like I was going to get looked after, rather than looked to as someone in a special role. Having said and settled that, we were then left with the uncomfortable inertia of a group trying to find direction without leadership.

We went round the circle, each of us in turn saying

something about why we'd come, who we were, what we did, and what we were hopeful for. We talked, 30 of us, about ourselves, our hopes, our fears and our needs for some hours. No-one's keeping time. The midges hover over our heads, the sun settles down into the treetops, long shadows, warm evening and a rising moon. Two men go off to cook supper, there are new arrivals and the circle disperses to wander, talk, rest or explore before supper.

Already a lot of questions that have been in my head for a long time have been aired. What is the relationship between personal liberation and political struggle? How do we deal with the conflicts of being gay, being a man, and being committed to feminist struggle? How does this affect our relationships with the women's movement, and our personal relationships with women? How do we break through our oppressive ways of relating together as men, in groups and in sexual and in non-sexual relationships? I wanted to explore ways of relating to men in groups and in sexual and non-sexual relationships—ways which consciously blocked our impulse to compete and repress feelings.

Saturday evening suppertime we attempted to form a loose structure for the following day, so we wrote 'topics to be discussed' on the blackboard: being a man; dance, the left; women/lesbians; monogamy, living in the country; massage, health; poster making, music; going to the seaside, lifestyles. Some of these topics were going to be dealt with in workshops, but

were more easily coped with in unstructured groups or in small or one-to-one conversations. Some of the negative aspects of leaving such an event without structure (though there wasn't any choice) are more apparent to me now—nobody made notes, reported back from workshops to the whole group, made any commitment to write down any thoughts or points of discussion. This lack of pressure on the other hand probably allowed for much freer flow of discussion.

Most mornings before breakfast David led dance workshops—except for a couple of mornings when he didn't want to get out of bed and then Bill did it. With French windows opening on to the lawn and the morning sun pouring through the windows the workshops took on a sort of absurd poufta poise, with much staggering, wheezing, grunting and giggling. It was good to share our mutual ineptitude, and also feel the satisfaction of being able to do some of the exercises well.

On Sunday morning we played trust games. It was interesting to see how the group functioned and how I dealt with my impulse to take on a 'leader' role, or alternatively a 'looking-for-a-leader' role. The games showed me some of the ways in which I see men as 'attractive', 'old', 'young', 'working-class' etc.—and how this affected my feelings towards them when it came to trusting them with my physical safety. I thought it was dangerous to put much emotional trust into the games in themselves, since they were games, and it's easy to play games when you're playing games,

*continued next page*



if you see what I mean. Some men spoke later about being let down as the easy atmosphere created during the trust games dissolved into familiar tensions and feelings of isolation. There's danger in the notion that self-change is an easy and comfortable process. Personal liberation for men involves struggles as intense and exhausting as any political confrontation. Games and having a good time are an important part of both, it's important to be conscious of the whole process and not to put too much store by any single aspect of it.

During Gay Men's Week we did manage to use a number of techniques from different sources (being on our best behaviour), trust games (from Esalen, Gestalt etc.) co-counselling techniques derived from Re-evaluation Counselling organisations; movement, breathing and massage techniques derived from bioenergetics, and other sources. Most of the sources can be condemned for their bourgeois sexist ideology, but as men in a patriarchal society it was time to say 'So what?!!' I feel committed to changing myself within the context of my gay awareness of self-oppression and that of a feminist analysis of sexism, my only course is to use means to a fuller self-awareness and other-awareness. If these have been developed in a humanist psychology, or in spiritual philosophies or whatever, we can use them where they're relevant to our experience and ideas of change, without making any alliance with the liberal, anti-gay, sexist, classist, racist philosophies in which their techniques are enmeshed. (On one level this is a load of shit because I know only a very few techniques and use even fewer, so I can't really preach fervent searches for, and use of, new Aids to a Higher Male Consciousness.')

Excuses for not moving manifest themselves pretty frequently here in the summer. The weather was clear and hot, and towards the end of the week most of us got out of our inhibitions and our clothes and got into a lot of nudity and swimming. Brown rice, bubble gum and being naked under a straw hat in a wickerwork chair on the lawns of Laurieston Hall all have a place in my revolution. And romance still takes my breath away and it gives me a perverse enjoyment to contradict my own dogma about romance and monogamy. But with all those nature-study walks and picnics at the seaside going on, I still felt a pressure to resolve some of my anxieties—like how does a large group of men dealing with issues of feminism and sexism remain inherently oppressive to women—or does it? Maybe that's disappearing up my arse, maybe it's best just to get on with it and not worry, but I did worry and the question nagged.

Power and guilt, the balancing of how we act as men, and identify as homosexual—as men who are not 'real men' and to whom the privileges of our gender remain accessible. We use these privileges in subtle ways, in our power through using them, power which is difficult to differentiate from the political assertiveness which we need to fight and survive, confront and change ourselves and others. The power we possess as men in a man's world is complicated by being middle-class and articulate, and as gay men together by being young, attractive, desirable etc. The power we were coping with using and defusing at Laurieston was the power in our relationships with other queers. We talked about the possibility of having a positive self-image, about regarding our own bodies as sexual and attractive. It seems that this is much easier to do for queers whose bodies comply with the desirability standards meted out by the media and pornography, and this reflects on our power in relationships, on our confidence in groups, and our guilt feelings about ourselves. We did not want to give credence to sex as a

capitalist commodity and the notion of 'attractiveness' and 'unattractiveness' as a problem, it seemed enough to recognise a mutual awareness of the situation.

As our 'process of struggle' broadens with the acknowledgement of mutual awareness, political assertions and confrontations, although no less fearsome, become more realistic with a basis of mutual trust and understanding to work from. Formerly, there hasn't been any concept of unity or solidarity in the anti-sexist 'men's movement' (if there is such a thing) and 'anti-sexist' men have constantly referred to the women's movement for support and validation. Men have to form new models of behaviour *for ourselves*, with our own directions and our own nurturing support systems. It is only with this autonomous support that we can struggle successfully to 'become traitors to the class of men... by changing ourselves from non-masculinists to anti-masculinists, and begin attacking those aspects of the patriarchal system that most directly oppress us.'... Us, ourselves, our oppression. But that doesn't mean 'men's liberation' either.

Trevor made that point alot for me. 'It's our oppression, we've got to keep at it.' Our oppressiveness, among alot of other things, our oppressiveness that seems clear. That also seemed to validate the inward-looking emphasis of Gay Men's Week. Pinpointing our oppression. But it also implies the necessity of direct action for change—'attacking those aspects of the patriarchal system which oppress us.' The possibility of direct action was something we avoided—the seeming impossibility of direct action—or the futility or ambiguity of it—defeated us. It gets tangled in the contradictions of male bravado/political assertion, personality cult/leaderless inertia, personal compromise and direct action within the Left/effeminate purity and maybe nowhere to go without the Left—or certainly with a lot of negative criticism from the Left.

'Working in the Left'. Yeah, that was one of the other workshops we avoided. The Left got heavily bashed during the week, and not always fairly—although some of us had experience with the Left which didn't incline us much to give a fuck whether we were bashing fairly or not. There were some men there quite heavily committed to working in Left organisations—the SWP, CP—they felt the need for the workshop, and I avoided it, I felt guilty and defensive and protective of my anti-Left stand. I also felt threatened because it seemed my ignorance of the mechanics of Marxist politics would be exposed in such a workshop and that my very emotional and gut-reaction opposition to the sexism of the Left would again be attacked with rationale and logic that I couldn't compete with. I do feel suspicious and resentful of the Left, critical of their tactics, their reluctance to understand or accept feminism. I react heavily to this kind of statement from the Left—'The belief that only the oppressed can understand, and therefore combat, their own oppression led to the creation of exclusionist tendencies—first along racial lines and then along sexual lines, and ultimately, in an absurdly logical extension, to exclusively lesbian organisations, all-male gay groups, Jewish feminists, Jewish lesbian feminists, fat feminists, etc.' (from *Women and Revolution*) This statement seems to epitomise the way that the Left generally negates the experience of the individual's oppression in order to construct a false ideal of unity and collective identity as a basis for struggle. This peculiarly naive statement totally denies the complexity of oppression—that sexism and racism exist in the working class, that racism and classism exist in the women's and gay

movements, that classism and sexism exist in racial minorities, and that self-oppression is an equally destructive element among all oppressed people. The Left presents me with an enormous pressure, the urgency for revolution against capitalism, that this revolution means analysis, organisation and mass action and to this end I must compromise my needs as an emergent effeminate gay man and be prepared to patronise, and be patronised by, my 'comrades in struggle'.

It was while attempting to spread the word about Gay Men's Week (through talking to radical gay men's groups—mainly in London) that it came clear to me that the idea of the event was counter-revolutionary according to the dogma of the Left. The event had nothing to do with the seizure of power on a mass scale to create a new revolutionary state. It was to the understanding, and dissolution of, oppressive power that I felt I was committed in helping to organise such an event. I came to a simplistic realisation during the week at Laurieston Hall, a realisation that is naive and incomplete, but, nevertheless, one that was useful to work with—that all imbalance of power, all power which oppresses stems from the initial seizure of power by men from women—the power which has been stolen by men. For men to seize power again, no matter how oppressed they may feel, is to perpetuate oppression. The Left without feminist awareness is male. The seizure of power by the Left is the perpetuation of oppression.

Later in the week we tried to put a poster together on a silkscreen. We never got beyond the ideas stage. Much of our discussion on the poster centred around wanting to produce something which was critical and nurturing at the same time. We tried to create images which showed the potential joy in relationships between men and at the same time, not ignore that relationships between men can be self-oppressive and oppressive if we get trapped in the stereotyped roles of male-bonding:— butch/femme, subject/object, dominant/submissive, master/slave or whatever. Various words were worked around for two days, on and off. 'Men Can Be Men Without Oppressing Women' was one which we thought over—the less euphoric, more realistic version of 'Men might possibly one day if we try hard and struggle alot, be men without oppressing women', seemed to have lost some of its impact. We gave up.

Instead of a poster, a mural was painted on the last day of the week—images of the remaining men against a background of personal splendour, with the words LOVING TRUSTING QUEERS IN REVOLT—LAURIESTON GAY MEN'S WEEK—JUNE 1977 floating on a procession of white clouds.

Reaffirmation of the word QUEER came about because a lot of us felt the word 'gay' to be trivialising and euphemistic, and that it wasn't enough that it was a word chosen by homosexuals themselves—if any word was picked arbitrarily from a dictionary, it seems that 'gay' was a pretty weird one to choose. 'Faggot' in this country means a bit of firewood or a tasty savoury treat in most vocabularies; 'pouf' is good, but not for staple usage, 'pansy', 'nancy-boy', 'fairy' and all the rest of them are great, but none of them hold the punch of 'queer'. 'Queer' is our equivalent to using 'faggot' in America—it's a word that is emotionally loaded, usually with homophobic fear and hatred, and it seems like it's about time that the word got defused reused unabused, because it's a strong word, it undermines and it threatens and it's difficult to use. Whatever the het calls you to your face, you can be sure that it's 'queer' that's used behind your back.

□ Jamie Lupin



Class of '77. Laurieston Gay Men's Week, Kirkcudbrightshire.



# LETTERS



Plans for the National Adoption Campaign - said the huge poster outside the Roundhouse, perhaps the only visible evidence that January 15's benefit was anything to do with NAC, but it was a lame one. "2000: The Sadista Sisters and Black Slate were boring, but that all m&g gay group Dead Fingers Talking poor. They came on LOUD and went off the same way. As for X-Ray Spex. I don't know if it was worth it, just for Poly Styrene's blue flippers suit and curly hair - maybe the blue flippers costume was a Woman's Right To Choose banner hung over the stage. (Mark Rusher)

that next month.  
Vertical Anarchist Collective  
[redacted]

Dear Zero®


I very much appreciate and enjoy your magazine, it felt as important to find a fitting new partner to examine our ideas, but I would like to see more critical/ thoughtful debate and analyses. For me this is the relationship of class - society, non-hierarchy, state and personal and social relationships to our desires of an anarchist society could use more debate in the movement. A rational debate on urban socialism will also become necessary soon. We are putting together a cassette of three positions on urban guerrilla warfare for The Anarchist Tape Series. (Incidental we are looking for distributors in Europe. Tapes in so far as *Parchy*.)

*An Anarchist Critique, The Development of Anarchism, and A Radical Analysis of the City*, all by Murray Bookchin, *Neighborhood Self-sufficiency* by Carl Hays, *IWW Folkways* by Urban Phillips, *Anarchist Strays of the Spanish Civil War: The Durruti Chronicles, Worker's Community Self-management* Spain, *Lesson by Norma Brashear* Working titles of forthcoming cassettes are *The Politics of Separation by Norma Brashear*, *Anarchist Feminism* by Helene Ellenzweig.

*The Politics From Prison* by Carl Hays and probably

Will Warren

would 1) Make tape copies, 2) Feed any surplus into anarchist activities/defence funds, 3) Make more tapes? Anyone interested, or in the meantime wanting tape (\$4.95), should write to me c/o Our Generation on 3934 St. Urbain, Montreal, Quebec.)  
Yours in love and anarchy,  
Pat Reed  
Montreal, Canada

 Dear Zero\*  
In constant fear of being  
abridged in your letters  
column.  
Cliche  
Richmond, Surrey

Dear Friends  
I am part of a loose  
grouping of marchers  
around Boston who are  
focusing on the struggle  
against nuclear power. One of our  
concerns is to develop a revolutionary  
critique of the nuclear power  
establishment (for counterpoise liberal,  
religious ideology which at present  
dominates the movement). A concrete  
step which we are considering is to  
publish a newsletter covering anti-  
nuclear events and ideas, from Europe  
and elsewhere. We are especially  
interested in the political ideas found  
in inter-nuclear movements (e.g. direct  
action is legitim). We would like to  
contact anyone who took part in the  
actions at Whyl, Kallar, Melville etc.  
For anyone who wants to make  
contact or requires information about  
the situation in the USA our address is  
82 Marion St. Somerville, MA02143  
USA.  
For a future worth living  
Charlie Gamble  
Somerville, USA

Dear Comrades of Zero  
Greetings and warmest  
congratulations for the  
splendid manner in which  
you have launched Zero  
that truly represents the anarchist idea

from a revolutionary standpoint as the first four issues show.

Anna Maria's article *Feminism and the Italian Left* is a much needed exposure of the male chauvinist attitude that still prevails in the anarchist movement. William Reichert's extensive *Partisans of Freedom: A Study in American Anarchism*, (Bowling Green University Popular Press, Bowling Green, Ohio, 1976) has a chapter called *The Place of Eros in Anarchist Thought* which includes the following detail about the French anarchist Joseph Dejacque who stayed briefly in New Orleans (1852-3) and published *Le Libertaire*. In a letter to Pierre Joseph Proudhon he accused: *Is it possible to read publicist that under your han's kin so much ass may be found Ruise your voice . . . against the exploitation of woman by man. Proclaim to the world . . . that man without the aid of woman, is unable to drag the revolution out of the mire, to pluck it out of the filthy and blood stained rut into which it has fallen; that alone he is powerless; that he must have the support of woman's heart and brain; that in the path of progress they should march forward together, side by side, hand in hand.*

George Woodcock may well have abandoned social revolution as a road to free society (*Destination Point, Zero 3*) but a closer examination of the causes that brought about the destruction of the libertarian communes of 'literally thousands of Spanish villages' and 'large areas of the Ukraine' is called for than given by him. The coalition government that was intended to save the social revolution from the onslaught of Franco's counter revolution proved to be the very opposite – due to its misacts against the true interests of the revolution – prompted by the expectation that it would thereby receive military and moral aid from democratic governments. Noam Chomsky in *American Power and the New Mandarins* deals at great length with what really happened in Spain under the heading *Objectivity and Liberal Scholarship* (reprinted in latest *Cienfuegos Review*). Chomsky points at the manner in which historians dealt with the subject – citing this example

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